BRITISH COLUMBIA BOARD OF PAROLE

ANNUAL REPORT 1989/90

Province of
British Columbia

92-06500/

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INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of parole is to support the basic aim of justice, the protection of society.

Parole provides an opportunity for offenders who have been removed from the community to return in a gradual and controlled manner.

In British Columbia the decisions to grant or deny parole are made by citizens. Parole, therefore, represents the community's direct participation in the criminal justice system.

The men and women who serve on the British Columbia Board of Parole must balance the interests of society and those of the offender each time they consider an application. They are guided by statutory criteria and a duty to act in a fair and objective manner.

CRITERIA FOR PAROLE

Parole Act (Canada)
Parole Act (British Columbia)

1. The inmate has derived the maximum benefit from imprisonment.
2. The reform and rehabilitation of the inmate will be aided by release on parole.
3. The release of the inmate on parole will not constitute an undue risk to society.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

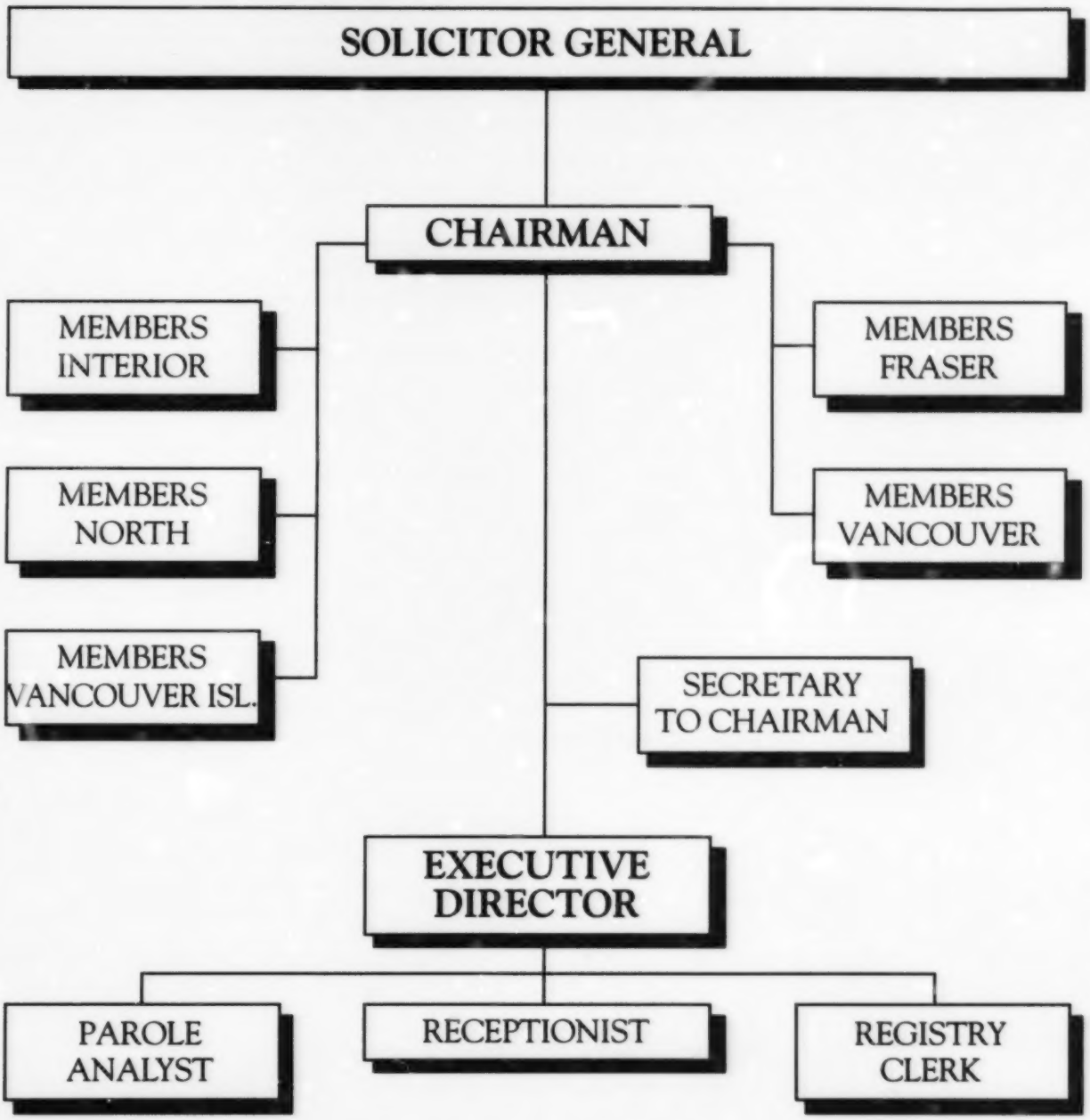
During the 1980's Canadians concerns for public safety resulted in a close examination of all aspects of the justice system. Average citizens and victims of crime perceived the justice system as having no interest in the general public and they became a powerful voice to demand change.

British Columbia responded to the challenge by passing legislation to guarantee victim's rights and commissioning the Justice Reform Commission which recommended many changes in the administration of the legal system.

Parole was scrutinized by a number of federal committees and commissions, including the Sentencing Commission and the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. A Green Paper on parole, Earning the Privilege, was issued by the Attorney General of British Columbia. This paper stressed the position that parole is a privilege that must be earned by the offender.

In 1988 a review of the British Columbia Parole Board by the Ombudsman recommended the development of a British Columbia Parole Act. This recommendation was accepted by the government and the Parole Act of British Columbia was passed in Legislative Assembly during this fiscal year.

As I look back over the past decade, I am encouraged that after having examined the concept of conditional release the community has satisfied itself that parole does serve the purpose of public safety. The task of the next decade will be to refine the process so that parole continues to meet the changing needs of Canadian society.



* Policy Executive - Chairman
Executive Director
Parole Analyst
Six Board Members

Staff Incumbents:

Executive Director:	Don Bell
Secretary To Chairman:	Sharon Scott
Registry Clerk:	Joyce Hall
Parole Analyst:	Nick Faragher
Receptionist:	Judy Allen

BOARD MEMBERSHIP 1989/90

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION

*Mary Ann Waldman	Victoria
Geoffrey Mason	Victoria
Muriel Watts	Courtney

VANCOUVER METRO REGION

Virginia Marshall-Lang	West Vancouver
*Ted Woodyard	North Vancouver
Susan Knott	Vancouver
Gerry Turner	Coquitlam
Lyn Greenhill	Richmond
Gordon Mackie	Burnaby
Donald Kennedy	New Westminster

FRASER REGION

James Lee	Abbotsford
*Ronald Dowbush	Delta
*Art Thornhill	Surrey
Dan Griffin	Maple Ridge
Andrew Milne	Langley
Helen Joe	Chilliwack

INTERIOR REGION

*Norma Kenoras	Chase
Ian Urquhart	Merritt
Dan Kilburn	Kelowna

NORTHERN REGION

Ann McCaffray	Prince George
*Doug McMillan	Fraser Lake
Catherine Lindseth	Terrace

*Policy Executive

Program Highlights

The Parole Act of British Columbia

The enactment of a provincial parole statute by the Legislative Assembly on July 17th, 1989 gave legislative force to the mandate, organization and independence of the British Columbia Board of Parole. The statute also enabled those sentenced under Provincial statutes the opportunity to apply for conditional release.

The development of the Parole Act of British Columbia has been a goal of the Board since 1979, when the Board was reconstituted to assume the paroling authority for all inmates serving terms in provincial correctional centres.

The Act defines the community focus of the Board and sets the terms of appointment for the Chairman and members. It contains the requirement for an oath of office for members and provides that they must hold no other appointed office while serving on the Board.

The parole program is contained in the latter part of the statute. The powers of the Board to grant and deny parole are stated, and other sections contain the decision criteria and the processes of suspension, termination and revocation.

Native Justice Consultation

The Parole Board was an active participant in the consultations with first nations on justice issues which occurred throughout the province in the past year.

The desire of native people to incorporate traditional tribal sanctions into the justice system presents a unique challenge for the Board. The Board's native members, with the assistance of the Executive Director, have undertaken to explore this issue and develop an action plan.

Regional Workshops

During 1989/90 the Board with the assistance of the Justice Institute, held a series of regional workshops attended by Board members, and Corrections Branch community and institutional staff. These forums provided a unique opportunity for an exchange of issues and information, not only between the Board and Corrections, but also between the community and institutional staff who provide vital information to the Board from different points of view.

These meetings also provided the Board with the opportunity to update Corrections Branch staff on paroling issues and consult with them about future direction in the Board's parole program.

Computerization of the Board

With the assistance of the Corrections Branch, the Board was able to update and expand its computer capabilities. New equipment for all staff was obtained and the Board was incorporated into the large network of Ministry computer information and communication systems. The advent of computerization opens the possibility of further expansion in the areas of information and financial management.

Order of Presentation

The lack of standardization of parole hearing files has been a concern of Board members for some years. This year a committee of parole coordinators and members tackled the problem and as a result of their work a standardized order of presentation was developed and adopted by all institutions.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MEMBER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The initial training and the ongoing professional development of members continued as a priority of the Board during 1989/90. In addition the Chairman and Board staff lectured on the history and process of parole to probation officer recruits at the request of the Justice Institute. The Board also participated in update training for experienced community staff.

An intensive three day training program for six new members of the Board was held in June of 1989. All aspects of parole, from law to philosophy, to the mechanics of the parole process and decision making, were covered in sessions. In addition, members learned about the many institutional and community programs of the Corrections Branch and how parole supervision is administered.

The ongoing professional development of members occurs at the two general meetings of the Board, which are held annually.

At the Spring meeting, the Board participated in a day long workshop on interviewing skills and heard presentations on "street people" and "youth gangs" from workers and police active in these special areas.

The major focus of the Fall general meeting was the sexual offender. Board members heard from a number of professionals who provide both treatment and control to this type of offender. The presenters also spoke about several issues of specific concern to members of the Board and were generous in taking questions.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The introduction of computers to the Board office resulted in both professional and support staff taking part in training seminars in word processing and the use of the Ministry's electronic mail system.

The Board was invited to the Corrections Branch Interior Conference and staffers also attended a career development workshop and the Women's Programs Committee Conference.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES

The Canadian Association of Paroling Authorities is a working group comprised of the four Canadian Parole Boards. Three provinces, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec have established Parole Boards to deal with offenders incarcerated in their provincial correctional centres. The National Parole Board deals with offenders in Canadian penitentiaries and provincially sentenced offenders in the remaining seven provinces and two territories.

C.A.P.A. met only once in 1989/90, in Quebec City. At this meeting Canadian Paroling Authorities received a presentation from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. As part of a major consultation of justice agencies in Canada by the Centre, the four Boards were asked to provide input into the Centre's strategic planning process.

The Boards also shared information on relevant case law, new policies and programs, transfer agreements and other common issues.

OPERATIONS

APPLICATIONS AND DECISIONS

The number of parole applications in 1989/90 decreased by 4.4% from 1380 to 1321. However, the rate of parole grants rose by 3.5% from 54.4% to 57.9% (Table I). This represents a reversal of a downward trend in parole grants. The percentage of inmates who withdrew their application for parole rose during the year from 206 to 234, an increase of 2.8% (Table II). Deferrals decreased from 53 to 47 as did the number of miscellaneous hearings.

The largest number of hearings occurred in the Fraser Region of the Corrections Branch, 634 (48%) of 1318 hearings took place in the institutions of this region (Table III).

PAROLE SUPERVISION

The number of paroles successfully completed during 1989/90 increased from 511 in 1988/89 to 579. The average number on parole each month was 330 (Table IV).

SUSPENSIONS AND REVOCATIONS

The were 153 parolees suspended during the year (Table V). Of that number 113 were revoked and 25 were reinstated. The sentences of 10 parolees expired while under suspension, 4 were apprehended in other provinces and transferred, and 1 parole was terminated.

A study of the circumstances of all parole suspensions during 1989/90 was conducted at the Board office. The results indicated that 113 or 73.8% of parole suspensions were as a result of a violation of a condition of parole. Only 40 parolees were suspended after a new charge was laid against them. It is not known how many of these charges resulted in a new conviction.

TABLE I

PAROLE HEARING DECISIONS

Fiscal Year 1989/90 (1988/89)

MONTH	GRANT	DENY	REVOKE	DEFER	OTHER*	HEARINGS	GRANT RATE
April	55 (50)	43 (50)	7 (14)	1 (5)	4 (7)	110 (126)	56.1% (50.0)
May	59 (59)	42 (45)	10 (8)	3 (6)	6 (11)	120 (129)	58.4% (56.7)
June	64 (56)	35 (55)	7 (7)	3 (4)	3 (5)	112 (127)	64.6% (50.5)
July	56 (68)	35 (53)	14 (10)	2 (9)	8 (2)	115 (142)	61.5% (56.2)
August	54 (67)	36 (47)	9 (5)	2 (4)	8 (10)	109 (133)	60.0% (58.8)
September	46 (52)	41 (56)	9 (22)	6 (3)	3 (5)	105 (138)	52.9% (48.2)
October	50 (33)	50 (45)	8 (8)	5 (3)	3 (10)	116 (99)	50.0% (42.3)
November	42 (38)	31 (39)	12 (12)	6 (7)	3 (8)	94 (104)	57.5% (49.4)
December	48 (54)	47 (44)	14 (10)	7 (3)	1 (2)	117 (113)	50.5% (55.1)
January	53 (52)	35 (26)	15 (7)	5 (0)	4 (6)	112 (91)	60.2% (66.7)
February	53 (41)	27 (40)	10 (7)	2 (5)	6 (5)	98 (98)	66.3% (50.6)
March	49 (69)	36 (35)	9 (13)	5 (4)	11 (5)	110 (126)	57.6% (66.3)
Totals	**629 (639)**	**458 (535)**	**124 (123)**	**47 (53)**	**60 (76)**	**1318 (1426)**	**57.9% (54.4)**

* Transfers, Changes of Conditions, Reinstatements

Table II

Parole Applications and Withdrawals

Year	Parole Applications	Parole Decisions	Withdrawals	Withdrawal Rate
1988/89	1380	1174	206	14.9%
1989/90	1321	1087	234	17.7%

Table III

Number and Type of Decisions by Corrections Regions

Fiscal Year 1989/90

	Grant	Deny	Defer	Revoke	Other	Total
Interior	102	64	3	17	3	189
North	95	65	4	15	7	186
Fraser	279	242	23	59	31	634
Vancouver Metro	57	33	2	5	7	104
Vancouver Island	96	54	15	28	12	205
Totals	**629**	**458**	**47**	**124**	**60**	**1318**

TABLE IV

SUPERVISION AND OUTCOME OF PAROLE

Fiscal 1989/90

MONTH	UNDER SUPERVISION	REVOKED	COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY
April	337	7	41
May	314	10	68
June	323	7	44
July	333	14	42
August	331	9	45
September	326	9	47
October	336	8	52
November	328	12	42
December	324	14	51
January	334	15	50
February	341	10	47
March	342	9	50
Totals	**3969**	**124**	**579**
Percent Successful Completion		**82.36%**	
Monthly Average Under Supervision		**330.75**	

TABLE V

SUSPENSIONS BY MONTH AND DISPOSITION

Fiscal Year 1989/90

MONTH	SUSPENSIONS	REVOKE	DISPOSITION REINSTATE	OTHER*
April	12	9	1	2
May	7	6	1	0
June	16	12	3	1
July	12	9	3	0
August	11	7	2	1
September	12	10	2	1
October	15	11	3	1
November	18	14	2	2
December	14	8	2	4
January	14	10	4	0
February	11	9	2	0
March	11	8	0	3
Totals	**153**	**113**	**25**	**15**

*Transferred to another jurisdiction under suspension
Sentence expired under suspension
Parole terminated